

## how happy is the blameless vestal's lot?

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/39205842) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/39205842>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Category:	<a href="#">Gen</a>
Fandoms:	<a href="#">Dream SMP</a> , <a href="#">Minecraft (Video Game)</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Wilbur Soot &amp; TommyInnit</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">TommyInnit (Video Blogging RPF)</a> , <a href="#">Wilbur Soot</a> , <a href="#">Toby Smith   Tubbo</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Alternate Universe - Superheroes/Superpowers</a> , <a href="#">Angst</a> , <a href="#">Hurt No Comfort</a> , <a href="#">Arguing</a> , <a href="#">Blood and Injury</a> , <a href="#">Head Injury</a> , <a href="#">Sleepy Bois Inc as Family</a> , <a href="#">Prequel</a>
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of <a href="#">a spotless mind</a>
Collections:	<a href="#">*consumes the angst*</a> , <a href="#">Completed stories I've read</a> , <a href="#">So many books so little time!!</a>
Stats:	Published: 2022-05-24 Words: 2,859 Chapters: 1/1

# how happy is the blameless vestal's lot?

by [bonesandthebees \(bonesandcacti\)](#)

## Summary

### **WARNING: SPOILERS FOR CHAPTER 18 ONWARDS OF THE WORLD FORGETTING BY THE WORLD FORGOT**

*If Tommy could, he'd tear down the entire goddamn city with his bare hands. He wanted to watch all those stupid buildings burn. He wanted to see the Hero Tower go up in flames, and roast marshmallows over the smoking remains of City Hall. Those places were mockeries of what they were supposed to do. Protect, serve, it was all bullshit. The city did nothing to protect Tommy when he needed it. He'd had to save himself, and it was the hardest thing he'd ever done.*

*"I know, and I understand that. You have every right to feel like that given everything the city's done to fuck you over," Wilbur said. "But you can't hop in the fight just yet."*

*"Why not?" Tommy challenged. "I don't get it. What's gonna be so different between me now and me in a year?"*

or, the night of Tommy's disappearance.

## Notes

hi everyone! did I plan on writing this? no! but last night I got the idea to write out this scene and it just gripped me immediately

anyway, just to make sure, warning: this contains major spoilers for the world forgetting by the world forgot specifically for chapters 18 and 19.

this is a prequel! it's set the night tommy went missing and lost his memories, so you guys can see exactly what happened before the events of the story :) timeline wise I'd say this happens a few months before the first chapter of world forgetting

TWs: violence and injury

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

“I can’t fucking believe you.”

Tommy stood in the doorway to Wilbur’s room, heart pounding in his ears as his brother glared at him from across the room.

“What do you want me to say?” Tommy asked, frowning at him. “That I regret it? Because I don’t.”

“I don’t-” Wilbur shook his head, folding his arms over his chest. “No, I want to know why the hell you lied to me and told me you were at Tubbo and Ranboo’s during the rally.”

Scoffing, Tommy took another step into Wilbur’s room, shutting the door behind him. “Because I knew you’d react like this.”

“What, because you think it’s unfair that I don’t want my little brother getting involved in this shit when he’s barely seventeen?” Wilbur snapped, raising an eyebrow. “You’re too young to start pulling shit with the Syndicate. Phil and Techno never should have let you participate-”

“For fuck’s sake, Wilbur, I was fine!” Tommy said, cutting him off. “I wasn’t in any danger or anything! I literally just stood in the crowd, pretended to be scared, and whispered some stuff into an earpiece Sam gave me. I wasn’t involved at all.”

“You were still *there*, in the middle of a hero villain fight,” Wilbur hissed, storming across the room towards him. “Do you not understand how dangerous that could’ve been?”

“I literally wasn’t in any danger!”

“How did you get back then? Did you meet up with Phil and Techno afterwards?”

Pausing, Tommy’s jaw clenched as he took a step back from Wilbur. “Yeah, after the rally ended I walked down several blocks to get to the car.”

Wilbur frowned. “What if you had been followed?”

“I wasn’t.”

“But you could’ve been. If you had been followed and someone saw you talking to the Syndicate-”

“But that didn’t happen!” Tommy exclaimed, cutting him off. “I’m fucking fine!”

Wilbur glared at him in response, and Tommy felt the familiar flames of anger building in his chest. It had been a while since the burning was caused by Wilbur, but the more they argued about this, the more it stoked the embers, and Tommy could feel his chest getting hotter and hotter.

“I know you’re fine now, but that’s not the point. The point is you, and Phil, and Techno all *lied* to me. Now Phil and Techno? Okay, fine, they’ve lied to me before. At this point I kind

of fucking expect it. But you?” Wilbur took a shaky breath. “I- I thought you trusted me. But if something bad had happened, I would’ve been the last one to know because no one fucking thought to tell me you were at the rally. How do you think I would’ve felt?”

There was a brief moment where guilt stabbed into his chest, because Wilbur had a point there. But it was quickly overridden by the burning flames as Tommy narrowed his eyes.

“Would you have let me go if you knew about it beforehand?” Tommy asked, fighting to keep his voice level.

Wilbur stared at him for a long moment, conflict swimming in his dark eyes. After a few tense seconds, he sighed. “No, I probably wouldn’t have.”

“Exactly,” Tommy huffed. “I’m not a fucking baby, Wilbur. I can make my own damn choices.”

At that, Wilbur sucked in a long, sharp breath. He went back to pacing around the room, dragging his hands through his hair and tugging at the ends.

“But you *are* a child, Tommy,” he groaned, pausing his pacing again to meet his eyes. “And I don’t mean that as an insult. You are literally a child still. You’re seventeen and shouldn’t be offered the opportunity to put yourself in a life or death situation!”

Oh. Fuck that.

“I might be seventeen, but that doesn’t make me an idiot,” Tommy hissed, taking a step towards Wilbur as the flames began to char his ribcage.

“I’m not saying you’re an idiot,” Wilbur sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Of course you’re going to want to participate in this stuff. It’s selfish for Phil and Techno to even ask you in the first place because they both know you’re going to say yes.”

“Yeah, because they understand why I want to be a part of this. They understand that I have a fucking score to settle with the city of L’Manberg,” Tommy said, his hands curling into fists at his sides.

If Tommy could, he’d tear down the entire goddamn city with his bare hands. He wanted to watch all those stupid buildings burn. He wanted to see the Hero Tower go up in flames, and roast marshmallows over the smoking remains of City Hall. Those places were mockeries of what they were supposed to do. Protect, serve, it was all bullshit. The city did nothing to protect Tommy when he needed it. He’d had to save himself, and it was the hardest thing he’d ever done.

The city fucked him over every step of his life. There was nothing good about this place. He knew that, and so did Phil and Techno. The entire Syndicate knew that.

Wilbur *should* know that. But right now, it really didn’t seem like he did.

“I know, and I understand that. You have every right to feel like that given everything the city’s done to fuck you over,” Wilbur said. “But you can’t hop in the fight just yet.”

“Why not?” Tommy challenged. “I don’t get it. What’s gonna be so different between me now and me in a year?”

“I just want you to take more time to really think about what joining the Syndicate means. What you’ll be doing. Who you’ll become.” Wilbur’s voice had dropped again, and he was staring very intently into Tommy’s eyes, like there was a deeper meaning to what he was saying.

“I know what I’ll be doing, and I’m ready for it,” Tommy said, meeting his gaze head on.

Wilbur’s brows furrowed. “No, you don’t. I know you think you do, but you really don’t get it.”

“What more is there to get? I’ve been going to Syndicate meetings for months! I’m not just Tommy the random kid you found on the street anymore. I’m Asphodel!”

At this, Wilbur winced. “If I could, I wouldn’t have let you do any of that. Hell, I wouldn’t even let you join at eighteen if I could because I still think that’s too young.”

Tommy scowled. “You joined the Syndicate when you were eighteen.”

“And that’s my fucking point!” Wilbur exclaimed, twisting his fingers into his hair. “I joined at eighteen and I thought I knew what I was getting into, but I didn’t.”

“Well that’s *you*, Wilbur. Not me,” Tommy snapped.

“But you don’t get it because you’re a fucking idiot, Tommy!” Wilbur suddenly shouted.

A fucking idiot.

Wilbur had just called him an idiot.

Clenching his jaw, Tommy stumbled back as the flames rose higher and higher in his chest. Burning smoke filled his head, turning his thoughts hazy with rage.

Meanwhile, Wilbur’s face had fallen as he realized what he said.

“Shit, fuck, that- that came out wrong. I didn’t-“

“For once in your life can you shut the fuck up?!” Tommy shouted, cutting him off. Wilbur’s mouth snapped shut, and Tommy took a step towards him. “You are a self-righteous asshole who thinks he knows what’s best for me because, what, you think I’m too stupid to make my own choices? I’m too immature? I lived on my own for *years* before I met you. I kept myself alive because no one else was going to, and I don’t think a fucking idiot could do that.”

“Tommy-“

“I don’t want to hear your bullshit anymore!” Tommy snarled. “Phil and Techno know I can make my own choices. They don’t think I’m stupid. But you do! You think I’m some idiotic child who’s gonna trip over his own shoelaces and fucking die!” His thoughts were spinning

and shooting off in every direction like sparks from a fire, and Tommy could barely breathe with how fast his heart was pounding. “I thought a brother was supposed to support me, not treat me like I’m fucking five!”

“I’m trying to support you,” Wilbur said carefully, reaching out for him. .

Tommy scoffed. “Well, you’re doing a shit job of it!” He stepped away from Wilbur’s reach, his vision practically red with the rage flowing through his veins. “I hate you, Wilbur! You’re a piece of shit brother and you know it!”

Wilbur sucked in a sharp breath at that, hurt flooding over his face like a dam breaking. He yanked his hand back as if he’d been burnt, and Tommy’s eyes widened as he realized what he said.

A part of him wanted to apologize. But his head was still going so fast, and the flames were still burning so hot inside of him, he knew that if he tried he would just end up saying something even worse he couldn’t take back.

So instead, Tommy backed away to the door. “I’m going on a walk,” he grit out between his teeth. “Don’t fucking follow me.”

And with that, he left the room and slammed the door shut behind him.

The hallway was dark. Tommy debated going back to his room, but the walls were already starting to suffocate him. His hands were shaking and he was buzzing with energy. He needed to get outside. To feel cold air on his skin to quell the flames making everything hot inside of him.

His shoes pounded against the stairs as he ran for the front door. He yanked open the front door and almost slammed it shut behind him, but stopped himself at the last second. He didn’t need Phil or Techno trying to follow him right now.

The night air was a balm against his flaming cheeks as he stormed down the street. He wasn’t sure where he was going, so he pulled out his phone and called the first number on top of his contacts list.

“Tommy?” Tubbo answered, sounding wide awake despite the fact that it was nearly two in the morning. “What’s up?”

“I’m coming over,” Tommy said, his voice echoing down the empty street.

“Wh- Right now?”

“Yeah, I’m fucking pissed and I need to not be in my house,” he said, smacking his shoes against the concrete.

“Did something happen?” Tubbo asked.

“I’ll tell you when I get there,” Tommy told him, not wanting to rehash the whole fight in the middle of the street.

“Alright, I’ll let Ranboo know. See you soon, bossman.”

“See you soon.” And with that, Tommy hung up.

Pocketing his phone again, Tommy huffed as he turned down another street towards Tubbo and Ranboo’s apartment. Already his anger was beginning to die off, sizzling like water against a hot frying pan. His steps began to slow, and his heartbeat calmed down to something that was more manageable as he thought back on his fight with Wilbur.

Wilbur was being a fucking asshole. That much was obvious. But Tommy couldn’t stop the guilt that was already stabbing into his chest when he thought of the pained look on his brother’s face when he stormed out of the room.

Tommy shouldn’t have left like that. He knew how Wilbur was. He practically wallowed in self-loathing when people yelled at him, and Tommy saying he hated him certainly wasn’t going to help. He isolated himself when things like that happened, so Phil and Techno weren’t going to be able to calm him down.

But Tommy couldn’t have stayed. He was too angry, and knew that he would just say something worse if he didn’t leave. Even now, there were still flickers of anger sparking in him, keeping the embers burning just enough to make him not want to take out his phone and call Wilbur to apologize.

It was fine. He could apologize later. He just needed some time to cool off.

So caught up in his thoughts, Tommy didn’t realize he’d made a wrong turn until he was well into a neighborhood he’d never seen before. He stopped walking, only to hear a second pair of footsteps stop just a second after his own.

Glancing behind him, Tommy didn’t see anyone following him. Hesitantly, he began to walk forward again, before stopping abruptly. Just like before, there was a half of a second where he heard another set of footsteps cut off.

He was being followed.

Normally, he’d assume that Wilbur had followed him out of the house to make sure he was safe. But Wilbur didn’t make any noise when he was invisible, so the footsteps couldn’t be him.

Shit. Someone else was following him then.

Tommy resumed walking, picking up the pace till he was at something closer to a jog. His heart was pounding in his ears for different reasons now, the still cooling anger turning to icy fear as he hurried down the twists and turns of the unfamiliar streets.

Wait. He recognized this area. His eyes skimmed over street signs as he realized he was close to the poorer part of the city. He knew the slums like the back of his hand, so if there was ever a place to lose a tail in, it would be there.

Ducking down another street, the buildings around him became more dilapidated as the street lights began to flicker. Deja vu washed over him, because it had been a while since he'd been in this part of the city.

He double-backed a few times, turning in circles along different streets to try and lose whoever was following him. If he kept going down this way, he'd find an alleyway he could hide in. It was the same one he'd slept in quite a few times as a kid, because it was hard to see from the streets so cops were less likely to notice him.

He picked up the pace. The alley was in sight, and without hesitation, Tommy dove into it with the intention to hide behind the dumpster.

But before he could even get his bearings, there were a rough pair of hands grabbing his shoulders.

"Hey hey, what do we have here?" A man's oily voice asked.

Tommy grimaced as he made out two burly men standing in the shadows of the alleyway. Shit. He should've checked before he ran in here.

"I- I don't want any trouble," Tommy stammered, glancing between the men and the entrance to the alley to hear if his stalker was still following him. "Just passing through."

The man not holding him laughed, and it was a grating sound that made him wince. "D'you hear that? Kid says he doesn't want any trouble when he's the one who disturbed us havin' a nice evening."

Icy fear wrapped around his chest as Tommy struggled to look unaffected. "I didn't mean to bother you guys. I'm just trying to get to my friend's place."

One of them laughed. "Well kid, you seem to be pretty lost then."

"I'm not lost. I know where I'm going."

The other one sneered. "I don't think you do. In fact, I think you're gonna need our help to find your friend's place."

"You got one of those maps on your phone, kid?" The one holding him asked. "We could just take a look, make sure you're in the right area and all. Wouldn't want a rich kid like you getting all turned around in a neighborhood like this."

Tommy recognized the veiled threat. They wanted his phone. But if they took his phone and let him go, whoever was stalking him might find him before he got to Tubbo's. He wouldn't be able to call Phil, Techno, or even Wilbur for help. He wouldn't be able to contact any of his family.

Fuck. He couldn't hand over his phone.

"I don't have my phone on me," he lied. "Left it at home."



Mocking laughter rang out. “Yeah right. Kids your age never leave their phone anywhere.”

“I- I swear!” Tommy pleaded, his voice cracking. “I got into a fight with my brother and just stormed out of the house! I was so pissed I forgot to grab it!”

“Well, have you checked your pockets? Because you might’ve already had it on you and just forgot,” the other man pointed out.

Tommy grit his teeth. “It’s not there.”

He was struggling to breathe. This was bad. Shit, it was bad.

They both smiled. “Well, we should probably check just in case.”

As one of the men reached for his pockets, Tommy tried to shove the one holding him back. The guy stumbled, but before he could try to run, the other one was grabbing him by the shoulders again and pushing him backwards.

“Stop! Please-”

Tommy slammed against the brick wall of the alley. He tried to push back, but the man shoved him again, and pain radiated through his skull.

One more try.

One more step forward.

One more shove back into the wall.

His head smacked into the brick, and there was a sharp pain before everything went black.

## End Notes

am I going to write more one shots in the wf universe? I have no idea. I didn't plan on ever writing anything else in the wf universe so this was very unexpected. I don't have any other ideas but who knows maybe one day I'll write another thing? we'll see but no promises

also, word of note: I couldn't really explain this bc it's tommy's POV, but the 'you're a fucking idiot' comment from wilbur was not meant as a dig at tommy. he was trying to point out that *wilbur himself* was an idiot when he was 18 and joined the syndicate, and that tommy is the same way. he doesn't understand what joining the syndicate really entails. wilbur was trying to basically warn tommy to keep him from making the same mistakes he did, but obviously he didn't do a very good job wording it so it backfired

anyway I hope you guys enjoyed that! some sweet sweet angst and context for the last conversation tommy and wilbur had before tommy lost all his memories and was brainwashed into thinking he'd been kidnapped by the syndicate :) now if you go and reread wilbur's reaction to finding out that lucid is tommy, you'll now know the context for the last time he saw his little brother :)))

man i really just put wilbur through a lot of shit don't I

please leave a comment telling me what you thought! I don't reply to most but I read them all and I promise they make my day <3

hmu on tumblr and twitter @bonesandthebees

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